



Election Modernization Committee

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Conducted by Remote Participation

Minutes (Draft – minutes were reviewed for accuracy but not approved by a formal vote)

Attendance: Greg Dennis, Juli Brazile, Len Diggins, Paul Parravano, Giovanna DeStefanis, Juhan Sonin, Lesley Waxman, Maxwell Palmer, Walter Horn, Adam Badik, Jennifer Susse, Patti Muldoon, Rebecca Gruber

1. Executive Order on Remote Participation

Greg reviewed the order.

2. Draft Minutes for Review, Edits, and Approval - Tue, Sep 14, 2021

Minutes from September were approved as submitted.

3. Status of Home Rule Petitions

Greg reported that the Consolidation of Town Meeting Elections had a hearing and should be approved without objection. The RCV petition has a bill number HD 4517 so we hope for more progress soon.

<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/HD4517>

4. Reprecinting Outreach Recap

Patti reported that we had great attendance (70 people) and feedback from facilitators was positive for the most part; good group discussions. These events are a lot of work, but worthwhile. Lesley noted that people in other towns noticed our event and asked whether their local

governments were doing similar events. Beer Gardens and Farmer's Market and similar fall outdoor gatherings are effective for outreach.

Juli updated on the district map impacts in Arlington and timing of the process. Presenting two versions to the Select Board on November 8. We won't have to split precincts. Greg asked whether EMC should take a role in the process or the related process of determining polling locations. Jennifer suggests that polling locations is where EMC can contribute. General agreement. We have data from the Envision Arlington survey and Juli will ask if we can have any feedback that relates to polling locations submitted during the reprecincting process.

Brief discussion on notification requirements for changes to precinct boundaries or polling locations. Mailing recommended but not legally required now when polling locations change. Juli would like to find out if she can combine a postcard application to vote by mail with notice to registered voters that they are in a new precinct.

5. Youth Voting Engagement

Geovanna reports that the sub-committee is seeking guidance. Walter contacted the statewide group and they are not recommending home rule petitions. They instead are asking for votes of endorsement for the Empower Act <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/S448>. Discussion on the merits of home rule versus direct lobbying of Town Meeting Members (TMMs) to build support for an endorsement. And discussion over how much advocacy EMC can do. Our previous advocacy has been in the form of recommendations to Town Meeting (our mission). Jennifer noted that the survey results did not indicate resident support. Geovanna reports there are students who are interested but she is unsure if they need to create a separate group. Some discussion over the difference between a student group and a student-led group that brings in partners who happen to be adults. More discussion will be needed on this point.

Motion by Juli: to ask the sub-committee to reach out to the Youth and Young Adult Study Group (created by Town Meeting (Article 17, 2021 ATM) to determine the need for and mission of a potential permanent board or committee aimed towards fostering youth and young adult involvement in governance) to ask the Study Group to include youth

voting as a plank in their recommendations. Walter 2nd. Vote unanimous.

Greg also likes the idea of a forum. A number of members still think the home rule approach is a good option. EMC has not taken a position on this issue. Patti suggests that acting as conveners and educators on a new issue (to many) is within our mission. She suggested the LWVA could be interested if approached by HS students. Geovanna will talk to Dr. Janger about school wide email outreach to collect more emails for potential youth advocates. The students can reach out to Town Dems - there may be other partners interested in educating and longer-term advocacy. EMC expires with the 2022 ATM.

6. Public Comment and/or Questions

Rebecca appreciates these meetings and has learned so much. EMC and RWG outreach was impressive on reprecincting. The outreach sparked interest, discussions, engagement which is good. Youth voting is another great topic for discussion and outreach.

Regarding reprecincting next steps it's important for proposals to be clear on the benefits of recommended changes.

7. New Business

Jennifer wonders if Paul can manage comments that are shared in the chat. Paul says he hears the text at the same time as people are talking. Links don't work for him in the chat. Greg agrees that we should avoid discussion in the chat. Paul will ask for links that he needs after the meeting.

Lesley spoke to Jeff Silvestro at LHS about a demo he is planning in Medford of their accessible voting technology. Android tablet with a commercial printer and headphones can generate a paper that confirms the votes and provides a QR code that the tabulator can read. Lesley hopes members of EMC could attend. LHS hopes to demo for the Elections Division soon. The fact that the current vendor still has a contract and that the federal funding for the machines usually identifies a single vendor may explain the delay in replacing the AutoMarks.

Accessible vote by mail is a separate issue. During the 2020 State Elections the Secretary of State contracted with a vendor to support screen reader technology at home to generate a ballot that could be mailed or emailed back. Boston is contracting with that vendor now. No word on what options other communities will have for their local elections or what will be required or offered for 2022 State Elections.

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:16

Next Meeting is November 16, 2021

December Meeting is Tuesday, Dec 7, 2021 tentative